THE

NECESSITY

FOR THE

Preſent Aſſociations,

Now forming generally through the

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Mr. Henry Stevens
Dec. 7. 1865

To the Public.

I Make no apology for offering my ſentiments upon the important buſineſs which at this time convenes the landed property of this and almoſt every other county.

It muſt be obvious to every one, that the merchant and tradeſman are the perſons from whom the State extracts the principal part of its revenue; and whoſe property is generally moſt directly expoſed to inconveniences and loſſes.

The increaſe of the value of landed property has always been proportioned to the ſucceſsful enterprizes of the merchant—the induſtry and ingenuity of the manufacturer and mechanic, joined to the labour of the hus-

bandman and working people. Theſe combined exertions have extended our trade—enriched the community, and till lately, nearly doubled the value of landed eſtates, within a ſhort period. The operation of the mercantile concerns upon the value of landed property is not the leſs certain for being circuitous; and the diminution it has ſuffered within two or three years plainly diſcovers, that the mercantile purſuits of this country cannot be obſtructed without immediately affecting the value of what has been denominated its only *real* property. But where is the difference between a thouſand acres of land, for which no adequate rental can be afforded for its cultivation, and £10,000 ſhut up unemployed in a man's coffer? they ſeem nearly alike *unreal* and unproductive. From hence it is the ſame to the country gentleman, if, by a ſeries of public miſmanagement, his land declines in its

its value, as it is to the merchant, if he ſuffers the loſs of his trade or capital.

Theſe obſervations, it is preſumed, are ſufficient to illuſtrate and ſupport the intimate connection there is between the landed and mercantile intereſts; and ought to unite them in making a general application to Parliament, for a redreſs as extenſive as the injuries and oppreſſions we are ſtruggling under.

However inconſiderable the ſavings to the public may by ſome be repreſented, from retrenching the needleſs and enormous places and penſions;* yet there is no doubt, but a rigid reform would tend much to contract the overgrown influence of the Crown—reſtore the freedom of

* Suppoſe only £100,000 could be ſaved, it would diſcharge the intereſt of a principal of two millions at 5 per cent. and probably prevent our being precipitated into a debt of another two million.

Parliament, by removing the cauſes of contention, which too often influence the votes of the members of that aſſembly. The Miniſter would then be ſupported, or deſerted, according as his meaſures appeared to terminate in the public benefit: and ſhould any matter ariſe, where the members of that Houſe were incompetent to form a deciſive judgement, they would appeal to their conſtituents for advice and direction.

The expenditure and application of the money raiſed for the ſervice of the State, is another very important article of enquiry. For in vain is it to retrench the beſtowment of places and penſions, when money voted through the medium of Parliament is either laviſhed or miſapplied. And here it may not be uſeleſs to reflect upon the enormous ſums which have been fruitleſsly ſpent in little

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more than a defenſive war with America; and how vaſt the expence muſt be, to ſupport an offenſive war with them and our confederate enemies in Europe. The pretence for the commencement of the American war has been dextrouſly and openly profeſs'd and deny'd, till it is to be fear'd, the public have loſt the remembrance of its firſt avowed object: which was to eaſe this country by a revenue drawn from thence. And the little public reflection that is now beſtowed upon this ruinous undertaking is either employ'd to diſtribute party-abuſe and invidious reproach, or to vindicate the war upon the footing of a ſtruggle for dominion: when it is notorious that the valuable eſſence of both dominion and revenue might at firſt have been retained by moderate and prudent meaſures. The infatuation of Adminiſtration reſembles the madneſs of an individual's giving an hundred

year's purchaſe for an eſtate, which he before once inherited, and, if again recovered, muſt for ever ruin his family in the expence attending the repoſſeſſing them of it.

The evil of the origin of this war in particular, and of wars in general, is, that they are engaged in without the neceſſity of protecting the poſſeſſions of the State, or the property and trade of the ſubject; and are therefore often maintained to the loſs of dominion in the one, and property in the other. It is not doubted but a war may be neceſſary in vindication of our allies, and to preſerve the balance of Europe againſt ambitious and encroaching powers. But whilſt our navy is ſuperior, our ſituation happily preſerves us, under Providence, from ſharing in its devaſtations and horrors, and renders a ſtanding army of any denomination, a poſſible engine of tyranny or anarchy.

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The diſadvantage upon which we have lately borrowed our public money, is as alarming as the enormous ſums that have been demanded. The benefit of ſuch extravagant public intereſt is enjoyed only by a few, to the great prejudice of the reſt; and does, perhaps, produce the moſt powerful advocates for the continuance of any unpopular meaſures. I have no doubt that it would reſtrict this great abuſe, if Parliament would reject the raiſing any money upon ſuch unjuſt and extravagant terms.—But here it may be objected, Are the operations of Government to be retarded for want of ſupplies? No; if they are neceſſary to the real intereſts of the community, and its ſafety would be endangered for want of them; theſe very monied people would probably be induced, for their own preſervation, to offer Government money on fair and reaſonable intereſt; and ſhould they refuſe, there

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is no doubt, but the community at large would ſubſcribe to the neceſſary exigencies of Government. That this mode of raiſing money is practicable, muſt appear when it is well known that they who contract with the Miniſter for the largeſt ſums, to be paid by inſtallments, generally diſpoſe of the chief part of their ſubſcription, before the ſecond or third dividend becomes payable. And another evil attending the Miniſter's dependence upon theſe monied men, is, that from their knowledge of a new loan being wanted, they uſe many contrivances previouſly to ſink the value of the Stocks, in order that they may treat with him on more lucrative terms.

The additional taxes conſequent upon the increaſe of our national debt falling chiefly upon the labour of our manufactures, has a tendency to enhance the value of our commodities

dities beyond the price of foreign markets, and to oppreſs the middle claſs of people, from whom we are principally to expect an attention to induſtry and invention. I do not mean to be underſtood to ſuppoſe a national debt in a moderate degree prejudicial. The ſudden acceſſion of wealth from the Eaſt and Weſt Indies,—the profits of an extenſive foreign trade, and its conveniency for public and private truſts, make ſuch a repoſitory uſeful and neceſſary. But it is apprehended that we ought to admit no more foreign creditors than may be neceſſary to ſecure them to our intereſt; the annuity paid to them being a clear loſs to the public, whilſt the intereſt of our own money is ſpent to the benefit of thoſe who contribute to its diſcharge.

The vaſt unaccounted ſums in the different departments and expenditure attending the naval and military armaments

armaments and expeditions, deſerve ſerious enquiry. In former wars, the repriſals made upon the enemy produced advantages ſufficient to recompence both the navy and the army, and were a reward which every military man was entitled to; the enjoyment of which revived the remembrance of his paſt ſucceſſes. But no laurels, either of victory or gain, have yet accrued from the American campaigns. From whence then come the fortunes amaſſed in a trip to the Weſtern World? Has the certainty, in any event, of being well paid, been found to extend the honour and proweſs of our national armaments, equal to the expectation of ſpoil from reducing a valuable foreign ſettlement, or the intercepting a fleet of merchant ſhips?*

Another

* This is not meant to reflect upon the courage or honour of ſuch as preceeded in this deſperate ſervice, but merely to expoſe the profuſion and ignorance of thoſe who engaged and drew them into it.

Another great ſource of public corruption and the waſte of our public money, conſiſts in the diſtribution of, and want of frugality in, our Government contracts. The immenſe fortunes that have been extorted from the public in this way, are great proofs of a prepoſterous diſtribution and unreaſonable profit. The actual participation of theſe lucrative bargains, together with the hopes that many from year to year entertain of being intereſted in them, will always retain a great many warm ſticklers for the continuance and extent of the moſt deſtructive war that can poſſibly be maintained.

Another ſource of corruption which diffuſes its miſchief both publicly and privately, is the raiſing money by a lottery. It is much to be queſtioned whether the diſtribution of tickets at the firſt coſt amongſt the repreſentatives of the people, and which

which has been attended with a clear and an immediate gain of ten per cent. has contributed to the intereſt of their conſtituents.* This, however, is certain, that lotteries have been a great temptation to diſhoneſty amongſt the lower claſs of people, to procure a few ſhillings to purchaſe ſhares or chances, and muſt ſurely appear deſerving the ſerious attention of Parliament.

The only thing which I ſhall now ſubmit to you and the other national aſſociations, is, to conſider how far it will be right to recommend to Parliament the diſqualifying all perſons from voting at a general election, who poſſeſs a place or penſion under Government exceeding 51. a year, as a meaſure neceſſary to promote the freedom of our elections; the law having already prohibited their interference in engaging the votes of others. It

* Lately they have been added as a douceur to the

It has been invidiouſly inſinuated that theſe aſſociations are intended to be an impediment to the exertions of Government. But the people's convening to propoſe to the attention of Parliament a ſtrict plan of œconomy is likely to be more publicly uſeful, and much leſs exceptionable than the late miniſterial endeavours to collect the people for the odious purpoſe of raiſing money by voluntary ſubſcription.—The few ſucceſſes which have lately attended us, being chiefly the effects of our maritime efforts, ought to point out to the nation the vaſt importance of purſuing the proper element of defence to this country, and offence to our enemies.

There are other numerous and very important cauſes to excite to a general aſſociation, and will, I hope, procure an attendance as reſpectable and general as the vaſt importance and extent of ſuch enquiries demand.

FINIS